



H.R. 6445 – VETERANS' HEALTH CARE POLICY ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2008

FLOOR SITUATION

H.R. 6445 is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Representative Don Cazayoux (D-LA) on July 9, 2008. The bill was ordered to be reported as amended by the Committee on Veterans' Affairs on July 16, 2008.

H.R. 6445 is expected to be considered on the floor of the House on July 29, 2008.

SUMMARY

Veterans' Copayments: The bill exempts veterans who are catastrophically disabled from being required to make copayments for hospital care or nursing home care.

Counseling for Family Members of Veterans: The bill repeals the requirement that mental health services for family members of veterans receiving treatment from the Department of Veterans Affairs must be initiated during the veterans' hospitalization.

Pain Management Policy: H.R. 6445 requires the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to develop and implement a comprehensive policy on the management of pain experienced by veterans enrolled in the VA health system by October 1, 2008.

Consolidated Patient Accounting Centers: The bill requires the Secretary to establish no more than seven consolidated patient accounting centers. The centers will be responsible for reengineering and standardizing revenue cycle activities for all health care services furnished to veterans for non-service-connected medical conditions.

**Note: This provision is identical to the text of the Veterans' Revenue Enhancement Act (H.R. 6366), which was introduced by Ranking Member Steve Buyer (R-IN).*

BACKGROUND

The Veterans' Health Administration is responsible for operating the nation's largest integrated health care system. The VHA is a direct health care service provider for more than 7.8 million veterans. The VHA operates 155 medical centers, 135 nursing homes, 717 clinics, 45 residential rehabilitation treatment programs, and 209 Vet Centers.

The Consolidated Patient Accounting Center was established as a demonstration project in 2005. It has enhanced VA revenues by more than \$12.5 million in fiscal year 2007.

COST

A Congressional Budget Office cost estimate is not available for this legislation.

STAFF CONTACT

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